

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Contact: Robert White/Drew Crockett
(202) 225-5074

**Government Reform Committee to Examine
Redundancy in Federal Child Welfare Programs**

*51 Child Abuse Prevention Programs Spread Through 4 Cabinet Departments
– A Prime Example of the Need for Executive Reorganization Authority*

* * * Majority Leader Tom DeLay to Testify * * *

**What: Government Reform Committee oversight hearing:
“Redundancy and Duplication in Federal Child Welfare Programs: A Case Study
on the Need for Executive Reorganization Authority”**

When: THURSDAY, May 20, 2004, 10:00 a.m.

Where: ROOM 2154, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Background:

The way the federal government is organized has a significant bearing on how the government operates. A streamlined organization reduces overlap and duplication, and enhances accountability, effectiveness and efficiency. With this hearing, the Government Reform Committee will look at one program area of the federal government – child abuse prevention, where 51 separate programs are spread among 4 Cabinet Departments– as an example of the need for a wholesale reorganization of the government.

Such reorganization can likely only be accomplished through re-establishment of the President’s Executive Reorganization Authority, which lapsed in 1984. Under such authority, the President can propose a reorganization of the government and receive an up-or-down vote on the proposal in Congress, thereby avoiding some of the jurisdictional battles that often spell doom for reorganization efforts. The National Commission on the

Public Service (Volcker Commission) endorsed the re-establishment of this authority in its 2003 recommendations for revitalizing the civil service.

This hearing will help the Committee gain a better understanding of the wide range of federal agencies and programs responsible for protecting and caring for our Nation's youth, and to what extent overlap and redundancy in these programs hinder the federal government's ability to care for its most vulnerable citizens. Witnesses will discuss the role and responsibility of child abuse and neglect at individual agencies; how those individual programs differ from agency to agency; and whether they believe that a reorganization of federal services could improve service delivery.

According to the General Accounting Office (GAO/T-GGD-00-128 presented at the Committee's April 3, 2003 hearing on Executive Reorganization Authority) there are "over 90 early childhood programs in 11 federal agencies and 20 offices. The system of multiple early childhood programs with firm cutoffs could lead to disruptions in services from even slight changes in a child's family status. While multiple programs target disadvantaged preschool-aged children, most such children do not participate in any preschool program." The programs referenced in the GAO report deal with a wide variety of early childhood initiatives, from language barriers to nutrition to financial assistance for higher education to child abuse and neglect.

The Committee will focus on one subset of these early childhood programs: child abuse and neglect prevention. Child abuse and neglect programs deal primarily with the following types of issues: foster care and adoption programs; child abandonment; child abuse prevention; child homelessness; domestic violence; child sexual abuse; child mental health services; special advocates for children in courts; child abuse investigation; and juvenile delinquency. The Committee hopes to use this hearing to determine whether this current structure is the best way to protect our Nation's most vulnerable citizens, or whether it would make more sense for some of the programs and offices to be co-located or consolidated to prevent duplicative and redundant services, and to prevent at-risk youth from potentially falling through the cracks of the various federal programs established to protect their well-being.

This hearing will feature testimony from Majority Leader DeLay, a longtime champion of disadvantaged children and advocate of government reorganization. DeLay and Davis will discuss pending legislation to reinstitute Executive Reorganization Authority.

WITNESSES

The Honorable Tom DeLay, Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives

Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Mr. J. Robert Flores, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice

Dr. Colien Hefferan, Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and
Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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